

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEHILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Hitchin

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117253

Headteacher: Mrs. F. Bradshaw

Reporting inspector: Carol Worthington
20609

Dates of inspection: 30th October – 2nd November 2000

Inspection number: 224326

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whitehill Road Hitchin Hertfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	David Williams
Date of previous inspection:	10 th February 1997

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		Design and Technology	The school's results and achievements.
		Music	How well are pupils taught?
David Tookey 9720	Lay inspector		How well is the school led and managed?
			Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
Patricia Holwill 11902	Team inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
		Science	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Art	
		Information Technology	
		Religious Education	
Ali Haouas 15023	Team inspector	English	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitehill Junior is a smaller than average sized school on the east side of Hitchin. It has 161 pupils (76 boys and 85 girls) aged seven to eleven, 20 of whom do not have English as their first language. Classes are grouped vertically, owing to the number of pupils entering each year. Pupils come either from mainly owner/occupied housing and have professional parents, or from the local well-established council estate. A significant number of families are on income support or other welfare benefits, though the number of pupils who claim free meals is below average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well above that found in most schools, though the number with statements is low. Most pupils have been educated at a local infant school, and attainment on entry to Whitehill fluctuates between average and below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an outstandingly good school with many excellent features. Standards of attainment have been rising steadily and are above average in mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2. This is as a direct result of very good teaching under very good leadership and management; the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher and very good management overall.
- Very good teaching throughout the school, and very good staff development by training.
- High educational standards, particularly in mathematics, science, design and technology, history, ICT, music art and physical education.
- Very good behaviour management.
- Very good quality and range of curriculum, including an excellent range of extracurricular activities.
- Makes excellent provision for social development, and very good provision for moral and cultural development.
- Excellent use of resources to improve standards.

What could be improved

- There are no key aspects of the school's provision which require special attention to effect improvement.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a very great improvement since the last inspection in February 1997. All the key issues have been fully addressed, and the behaviour policy in the school is now very good. Partnership with parents is very good. Leadership is effective in all areas of curriculum development, and there is now very effective assessment, which is used very well. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained, despite fluctuating attainment on entry. Those in art, ICT and design and technology are well above average; music, physical education and history have improved to be above average now. The standards of teaching and management have improved. There has been a great improvement in the school's accommodation; the buildings have been refurbished and the outdoor area has been beautifully crafted and enhances children's education.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	C	C	C
mathematics	D	C	B	B
science	D	C	B	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards have been rising steadily over the last three years in mathematics and science. Attainment on entry to the school of the pupils who took the Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 was well below average, particularly in English. They made very good progress, and targets were exceeded in all three core subjects. The standard of work seen during the inspection concurs with these results, and it is likely that the current Year 6 will do better; they have already exceeded the school's targets for them. Reading, speaking and listening are above average, as are mathematics, science, music, history and physical education. Standards in art, design and technology, and information communication technology are well above average. The standard of writing is satisfactory; standards of religious education and geography are satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and show great enthusiasm and pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite and show a good sense of social responsibility.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; a strength of the school. Pupils respect each other and their teachers and show a mature attitude to learning
Attendance	Very good

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	-	-	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Of the 38 lessons observed, over one third was very good or better; nearly three quarters were good or better. One lesson was excellent; none was unsatisfactory. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of all the subjects they teach, and children learn very well as a result. Good planning allows very good productivity and pace of working, and the good range of teaching methods inspires pupils to make a concentrated effort. Those with special needs and for whom English is an additional language make very good progress, and work is usually sufficiently differentiated to reach all levels of ability. The teaching of numeracy is good; the teaching of literacy is satisfactory with some good features.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There is high quality provision in all areas, particularly in art, design and technology and music. The range is wide and enhanced by cross-curricular reference, especially in information communication technology. Extracurricular provision is excellent, and enriches pupils' experience.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; a strength of the school. Individual Education Plans successfully set achievable targets, enabling these pupils to take full part in school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. These pupils are very well supported.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent for social, very good for moral and cultural, and good for spiritual development. A great improvement since the last inspection. Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. It works well in partnership with parents, consults them and their children on aspects of school life, and encourages them to work with their children on a regular home-school project. Assessment is both made and used very well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership by the headteacher and very good management of the school overall. The educational vision is translated into reality by excellent allocation of funds.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. All statutory requirements are met. Although newly formed, the governing body already has very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and offers a great deal of valuable expertise.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school has developed this area of its work very well from the last inspection, and takes plenty of opportunity to compare itself with other schools.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. All grants and funding for specific purposes are used well, and there are very successful practices in place to ensure that value for money is achieved when purchasing goods and services.

The delegation and the contribution of staff with management responsibilities is very effective. All are responsible for certain areas of the curriculum. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is excellent. Accommodation is spacious and very well used; learning resources are very good and used to excellent effect.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management of the school. • All children like school. • Behaviour. • Teaching. • Their children are helped to become mature and responsible. • Extracurricular activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about their children's progress. • A consistently applied policy for homework which includes marking.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' views on the points that please them most, but found that there is plenty of information available about their children's progress and that homework is consistently given and marked.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards of attainment in the school as shown by the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 are broadly in line with the national average and that for similar schools for English, and above average for mathematics and science. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards at the end of the key stage have fluctuated over the past four years, depending on the level of attainment on entry. In general, they have been rising steadily in line with the national trend since 1998.
2. The achievements of pupils taking the tests in 2000 were particularly good, since many of them entered the school with well below average attainment, especially in English. Although not all eleven-year-old pupils were at this school for the whole of the key stage, those who were made very good progress; the expected average gain in National Curriculum points between the ages of seven and eleven is 12. On average, these pupils gained over 13 points, showing that this school has added considerable value to their education.
3. Standards seen during the inspection were similar. In English, they were above average in reading, speaking and listening, and average in writing. Both mathematics and science standards were above average, even though the inspection took place at the beginning of the academic year. In English, higher ability pupils have developed a very good vocabulary and give synonyms, such as 'despicable' and 'atrocious' for 'obscene', when studying features of Adrian Mole's diaries. They show good speaking and listening skills when discussing Tudor music and the words of 'Pastime with good company' in a music lesson. Pupils read well and enjoy a variety of books.
4. In mathematics, pupils show their good grasp of number patterns as they reach the end of the key stage, and the majority calculate quickly in their heads with accuracy. They interpret graphs and charts, and use a computer to aid them in analysing data. They have a good understanding of measurement using standard metric units, as shown by their accuracy in design and technology lessons.
5. In science, pupils are making good progress in developing scientific thinking and skills which underpins all other work. Older pupils are particularly adept at predicting the outcome of investigation, testing their predictions fairly and applying their good knowledge to draw conclusions. Pupils have covered the National Curriculum programmes of study in great depth by the end of the key stage and have a good background knowledge of science from physical, biological and material science, which prepares them well for the next stage of learning.
6. The art observed around the school was of extremely high quality, and in some cases matches the achievement only seen by very good Key Stage 3 pupils. Great attention has been paid not only to the progression of skills in the key elements of light, shape, colour and tone, but also to imaginative use of artists' work and artists in residence. Art has a high profile in the school and there are innumerable excellent examples of pupils' work displayed, such as ornamental seed cases made from different types of fabric, the striking 'aquarium' with its ornate three-dimensional fish, and many examples of work in the style of famous artists, such as Magritte's 'The Bowler Hatted Man', showing the mature breadth and depth of study undertaken.

7. In design and technology, standards are well above average; again, work done by older children, for example moving toys using mechanisms such as cams and the solar powered vehicles, is of a standard more usually found in the next key stage. These are very imaginatively finished, reflecting, again, pupils' artistic skills.
8. Standards in music history, physical education and information communication technology are above average; pupils have a good knowledge of music from different eras, and many of them play an instrument. The standard of singing is above average; the choirs are well supported, and they lead the singing well in assembly, also providing descants to whole school songs, such as 'Michael row the boat ashore'. In history, pupils achieve above average standards as they learn about different periods of British history, such as the time of the Tudors. They enhance their studies by a visit to Kentwell Hall, which specialises in the Tudor period, with lessons including the making of a typical Tudor pottage, singing and dancing to Tudor music. In physical education, standards are above average and enhanced by a wide and rich range of extracurricular activities, including basketball, netball, dancing, badminton and football, which cater for a large number of pupils. In information communication technology, pupils use their good skills widely across the curriculum for research and data analysis.
9. In geography and religious education, standards are average. By the end of the key stage, pupils satisfactorily compare North Hertfordshire with North Norfolk, drawing on their field work visit to West Runton. Their research skills develop well throughout the school in the use of CD-ROM and the internet.
10. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose achievement is not quite up to the expected standard at Key Stage 2 receive extra help and support from booster classes run in addition to normal lessons. These are very successful in raising standards. There is no significant variation between the attainment of boys and girls that is markedly different from the national trend. The effective use made of baseline assessment and the analysis of assessment data has enabled the school to identify pupils who are underachieving and has targeted support well to raise their achievement. The school has an effective approach also to recognising and fostering the skills of talented and gifted pupils, and works in partnership with parents to ensure, for instance, that pupils who show excellence in mathematics are supported.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils are very keen to come to school and quickly settle down each morning to read or draw with minimum supervision from their class teachers. They are proud of their school and very enthusiastic about learning. They are very keen to show visitors around, and pleased to explain the various displays in classrooms and other areas. Pupils in all years responded very well to inspectors' questions about the school and the teachers.
12. Pupils take an active interest in their learning and are fully involved in the general running of the school. They act as monitors at playtime, for example, or may be members of the school council. They participate actively in the wide range of out of school activities, such as the football and netball teams, the school choirs and a range of clubs.
13. Children are very polite and exceptionally well behaved. This is a great improvement since the last inspection. Behaviour was very good during a whole school assembly seen, in the classroom, and in the playground at play and lunch times. A good

illustration of this high standard of behaviour was the quiet calm atmosphere during indoor morning play on a very wet day. There have been no exclusions during the last year.

14. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The children respect each other, their teachers and other adults who work or help in the school. Personal development is another strength of the school. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility and readily undertake a wide range of demanding tasks. The school council comprises elected members from each class who discuss many relevant issues, such as the draft of the home-school agreement before it was sent to parents. Another example of pupils taking responsibility is the use of monitors to note the names and reasons of children entering the school at break times, so that the teachers are aware of what is happening.
15. The school provides a very calm and supportive atmosphere where all the children are free to learn without oppressive behaviour. In both playgrounds (upper and lower school) all children were seen playing together very well. No bullying was observed, neither were there any incidents of racism. All pupils mix well across ethnic and gender lines at work and play, and enjoy harmonious relationships throughout the school. The positive ethos of inclusiveness in the school enable all pupils to develop self-esteem and develop confidence and motivation for learning.
16. Attendance levels are well above the national average, and the school has effective measures for following up any unexplained absences. Punctuality is very good and lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Of the 38 lessons seen, over one third was very good or better; nearly three quarters were good or better. One lesson was excellent; none was unsatisfactory. The very good work seen in pupils' books and on display in all subjects endorses this judgement. Teachers have a very good knowledge of all the subjects they teach, and children learn well, usually showing great interest and application. There is a wide range of expertise amongst teaching staff, including art and music, and this is enhanced even further by specialist teachers who come in part-time for specific lessons in science and design and technology. This is particularly valuable in ensuring that work is taught at a high level and that progress is maintained throughout the school. In the case of design and technology, the progress is assured by the same teacher teaching in the infant school.
18. Teachers' planning is good. It is matched to the ability of the pupils in the English and mathematics sets, based on assessment of current achievement. Since all the pupils in sets are working at similar levels, further differentiation usually lies in the amount of support given, and in the extension work relating to higher thinking skills. This enables all pupils to succeed in meeting learning objectives; some exceed them. Various methods of matching work to pupils' needs are used. In ICT lessons, year groups in classes are separated so that they all have a turn to work individually at a computer on suitable work. In science, some separation also occurs to enable the right targets to be set for year group in the class. In humanities, work is planned well to meet the needs of all abilities in the classes.
19. Teachers have appropriately challenging expectations of their pupils; lessons usually proceed at a good pace and are very productive. In a Year 5/6 English lesson, for example, the pace was brisk but relaxed throughout the first part where pupils were analysing text for tense, events, length of sentence and voice. They learned new

words quickly before they were set tasks to find synonyms. By the end of the lesson they had learned a very good range of vocabulary and understanding was revealed by all pupils during the question and answer session. In some lessons, however, learning objectives are not communicated to the children clearly enough, and momentum is lost. This was particularly noticeable in some literacy sessions. On occasion, teachers expect the whole class to do the same work, as seen in a mathematics lesson, and the pace slackens and higher ability pupils become less appropriately challenged.

20. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and manage their pupils very well. In a mental arithmetic session, for example, the teacher based her initial questioning on 'how?' and 'why' to promote clear thinking. Praise and encouragement helped hesitant pupils gain confidence with very good results. When the next number was introduced in a different way, pupils were intrigued and thus prompted to find number patterns with penetrating success. Pupils show a corresponding ability to work independently, and most concentrate well in lessons. In a literacy lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to think about spelling certain words in direct relation to text, and then identified common spelling patterns. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, commensurate with their ability, as seen in a numeracy lesson when the class was divided into groups. Lower ability pupils set to their task immediately with help from a classroom assistant, becoming involved and keen to explain their working to others. Pupils of above average ability are given appropriately challenging work in most lessons, and make good progress, as seen in another numeracy lesson where they were given extension work to examine the probability scale.
21. Teachers' use of time is very efficient; support staff and material resources are used very well. In an information communication technology session, for example, the teacher gave a crisp introduction before the class proceeded to the ICT suite. All pupils were fully engaged, working collaboratively and efficiently. In a design and technology lesson, all pupils were seen busily and safely working on their designs; the teacher efficiently used time with each group of pupils making sure each one measured accurately before attempting to saw.
22. The use of ongoing assessment is very good. Everyday marking is rigorously carried out according to the school policy, and helpful comments for improvement are made. Teachers speak to younger pupils individually if they cannot read the written comments. All teachers know the focus for assessment through the very thorough assessment opportunities identified during the year. Teachers keep thorough records of children's work, and use them to plan the next stage of the curriculum. A good example was seen in a literacy lesson when the teacher judged that her pupils had not achieved a satisfactory understanding of similes, and so were re-doing the work in a different way in order to make this clearer. Very good progress was made during this lesson, and pupils were able to re-write a newspaper article, replacing adjectives and verbs; some of the finished revisions were judged by the class to sound much better than the original. Homework is regularly set in all subjects at an appropriate level to help extend work done in class. It is marked promptly and helpfully.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

23. The previous inspection reported that the school provided a broadly based and balanced curriculum, which included all subjects of the National Curriculum and

religious education. Since then all aspects of the curriculum have been developed to ensure that the school promotes academic development and high achievement of its pupils. The school has successfully extended the range of opportunities offered to pupils in information communication technology, developed the school grounds as a resource for learning and has recently introduced a personal and social education programme with the older pupils. As a result, the quality and range of learning opportunities offered to the pupils are very good. All the statutory curricular requirements, including the provision of religious education, are fully in place.

24. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum is very good and meets the interests and needs of all pupils. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, and this is a strength of the school. The support for the pupils is given through a mixture of withdrawal from lessons and help within lessons. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Pupil's individual education plans (IEPs) successfully set appropriate and achievable targets for their future learning, especially in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils are able to take a full and active part in the work and life of the school. The introduction of booster classes for literacy and numeracy after school also helps to improve basic skills.
25. There are effective policies for all subjects. The curriculum is very well planned using a cycle of two yearly topics, to ensure coverage and balance within each year of the National Curriculum. Teachers in the lower and upper school groups plan in detail for each half term and then weekly. These plans are checked in draft and again on completion by the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators. This helps to ensure consistency, to enable suggestions to be made for future learning and for resources to be carefully targeted to teaching and learning.
26. There are good strategies in place for the effective teaching of literacy and numeracy. Particular emphasis is also given to science, and the use of information communication technology across the curriculum gives good support to all other subjects. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Project. It has now reached the stage where the staff are seeking ways to ensure that other aspects of English, for example, opportunities for pupils to write at length for a variety of purposes, are fully incorporated within the timetable. The school's Numeracy Strategy is good. The guidelines and methods for delivering the whole curriculum are clear, as are monitoring and evaluating provision. Some commercially produced schemes and guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are also used to help ensure progression and continuity of the work, as well as supporting the teachers' medium term planning. The coherence in policy documents and schemes of work, planning and assessment is a strength of the school's curriculum. Procedures for reviewing the curriculum are also well developed and provide a firm basis on which the work of the school can be evaluated.
27. Excellent provision is made for pupils to take part in out of school activities and clubs. There is a very wide range of activities including choir, instrumental tuition, orchestra, computer, badminton, netball, football, French, dancing, recorders, gymnastics, basketball, chess, science/engineering and homework, some of which take place regularly and some on a seasonal basis. Parents also support extra curricular provision by giving of their time. Pupils are taken on trips to museums and other places of educational interest. Each year the older pupils take part in a residential week away from home. All these activities help to make a rich contribution to the quality, breadth and range of the school curriculum.
28. The school offers equal access and opportunity within the curriculum to all its pupils.

Each day, pupils in all years are grouped by ability for English and mathematics. Staff work as a team to plan the work and regularly meet to ensure that pupils are given work best suited to meet their particular needs within each group. All pupils also have equal chance to participate in activities organised outside the school day.

29. Statutory requirements are met for sex education. It is appropriately included in the school's curriculum, which also makes good provision for personal, social and health education. This programme also includes an awareness of the misuse of drugs. It forms part of the school's programme to encourage good citizenship and includes opportunities to meet workers from essential services, such as the police and the fire service.
30. Besides having very good relationships with parents and carers, the school has very constructive links with its main feeder infant school, other local primaries and the secondary school to which most pupils move on. These links are both formal and informal, and take place through structured termly meetings based on neighbourhood clusters. Staff from the schools meet formally to discuss transfer arrangements and curriculum matters, and to ensure that pupils' records and attainment data are effectively passed to the receiving school. Curricular ties are beginning to be made; the design and technology programme begins in the infant school and continues through Whitehill and on to the secondary schools.
31. The overall provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school is a very supportive community where pupils are valued and well cared for. These aspects of school life are sensitively fostered through areas of the curriculum, and they have helped to bring about the caring ethos that permeates the school. The school complies with the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship that is mainly or wholly Christian in content.
32. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies each day incorporate an act of worship, which make a good spiritual contribution to pupils' education. However, whilst there are often spontaneous opportunities, too few are planned in the wider curriculum for pupils to reflect upon their own spiritual experiences, and those of others. Although there is no written, planned programme for teachers to link activities within their classes to themes explored in assemblies, all teachers take turns to lead an assembly regularly. This arrangement provides all pupils with opportunities to take an active part, and to share their thoughts and work with the rest of the school. During assemblies pupils are very well behaved and attentive. There is a calm, family atmosphere. Music is played as the pupils enter and leave the hall, and pupils sit quietly until the whole school assembly is present. On three days of the week, children come in to live music performed by members of various music clubs. They sing hymns tunefully and enthusiastically, and show appropriate reverence when asked to reflect or join in the prayer of the day. In subjects such as science, art and music, the pupils' spiritual development is given significance. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan for pupils to reflect and, whenever possible, consider the non-material dimensions of life. In a science lesson, for example, pupils looked closely at a collection of seeds and commented on how beautiful they were when examined under a hand magnifier.
33. The teaching of moral issues is a high priority, and provision is very good. The school promotes a strong moral code; its aims include creating a caring, supportive and friendly environment. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work and school life are very good. They understand and accept the rules for good behaviour inside and outside the school, and are taught to know right from wrong. Adults in the school provide

good role models for pupils, who respond very well. The school emphasises positive behaviour, which they reward by giving house points in a variety of situations. Pupils are regularly praised and encouraged when they behave well. Teachers make their expectations of behaviour very clear to pupils and each class has formulated its own rules of behaviour whilst the school's behaviour code is displayed in the common areas. Older pupils in their personal, health and social education (PHSE) lesson were able to consider moral issues such as honesty, and to make moral decisions based on their reasoning and feeling about different situations. Other curriculum areas also support the work on moral issues, when, for example, younger pupils discussed the idea of fairness in their work in science.

34. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development. The staff have developed a secure and friendly environment through which pupils value and care for each other. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils and their peers are very good. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to take responsibility, show initiative and develop an understanding of how to work in a community; the school council makes a very good contribution to this. In lessons, they work well together in pairs or larger groups, and are polite and friendly to visitors. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in their classes. In one class, pupils spontaneously applauded one child who succeeded in reading out her work for the first time. The school regularly raises funds for charities, some by devising fund-raising projects by the pupils themselves. On residential visits they develop an ability to care for themselves and each other. They also have opportunity to contribute to their own learning by working alongside other adults in class and clubs, such as the science/engineering club, and by taking part in competitive sports.
35. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The curriculum is planned to foster the pupils' cultural growth. Since the last inspection, planned opportunities for the study of non-European cultures and faiths other than Christianity have been implemented. Classroom displays show artefacts, extracts from the internet and photographs to support the study of Egypt and the Islamic faith in humanities. It includes the use of the immediate environment, and visitors to bring different expertise and viewpoints into the school. The school provides appropriately for pupils to appreciate their own local culture, and is addressing living in a racially mixed world with an appreciation of the contribution that all cultures make to life in England. Pupils are taught to appreciate and develop their own cultural traditions through work on the Romans and Tudors, through visits to museums and concerts, and through occasional visits from artists and writers. Opportunities are being developed for pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures, including an awareness of musical styles from different traditions. Other faiths and traditions are taught in religious education so that pupils can consider different cultures. This helps pupils to understand the needs of fellow citizens, often from other cultures or continents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy which has been recently reviewed and is effectively implemented. At lunch times pupils are very well supervised. In both the upper and lower school playgrounds the children are supervised by a teacher and midday supervisory assistant. Arrangements for child protection are good, and the school has a clear policy. The designated co-ordinator has received the appropriate training, and also participates in a local support group.

All staff are aware of the relevant procedures to be followed. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' developments are very good. All teachers know the children by name and provide very good support and guidance to help the children become confident and self-reliant.

37. Measures to promote good behaviour and attendance are very good. Comprehensive and well-written policies on behaviour, bullying and attendance are implemented effectively. The policy on behaviour is backed up by an illustrated code of conduct which sets out how the children are expected to behave. In addition, good behaviour is positively encouraged by the award of a cup to the class who, in the opinion of the staff and monitors, have worked and behaved well. Attendance is regularly monitored and there is good liaison with education welfare service.
38. The school has developed thorough and very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainments. The use of tests and assessments to guide curriculum planning is good. Testing procedures are used effectively to plan setting arrangements. The school has undertaken detailed and informative analysis of data received from standardised tests to monitor trends over time. Class teachers keep a record of individual pupil achievement. Assessments made from the medium and short term planning are effectively used to plan the next steps of learning. Pupils' work is regularly and carefully marked and encouraging comments made. Clear procedures are used to identify needs and target support for pupils who are identified as underachieving. However, tracking of assessment data is not yet made though the use of a spreadsheet programme.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Parents' views expressed at the parents' meeting and in questionnaires about the school and their children's education were most positive. They indicated they were particularly pleased with the school's leadership and management, the teaching, the behaviour of the children in school, the way the school helps children to become mature and responsible and the provision for extracurricular activity. There was some dissatisfaction with information given about children's progress and the provision of homework, which was thought not to be consistently applied or marked. Inspectors agreed with the points that pleased parents most, but found there is plenty of information available about children's progress, and that homework is consistently given and marked.
40. Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Since the last inspection, the school has worked very hard to develop and maintain an effective partnership. The staff and governors now enjoy parents' full support. This is demonstrated by results of a survey of parents' views undertaken last year by the governors and staff. The response rate was about 60 per cent, and replies to questions about communications with the school indicated that very few parents had any problems. The response to the Ofsted questionnaire concurs.
41. A full range of written information has been produced and has either been sent to parents or is freely available from the school. This includes a comprehensive handbook for parents, which provides information on all aspects of school life, leaflets on policies such as behaviour and homework, and notes on how to help their children with reading, writing and spelling. The annual governors' report is well presented and informative. Parents' views had been sought on the home-school agreement before it was formally published. This agreement is now in place and working well.

42. Parents consider the annual reports on their children's progress to be useful and informative. After consultation with parents, the school recently introduced a new style of word-processed report which listed under each subject the year's achievements and advice for next year. Most parents feel that this report, together with discussions with the teachers on consultation evenings, gives them a full picture of their children's progress. Parents also feel that the school is very approachable and, if a problem occurs or they need advice they would not hesitate to visit the school and discuss it with the headteacher or one of her staff.
43. Parental support for the school is very good, a number of parents help in class or with routine administrative tasks and many more help with after school clubs or school trips. The school shares a very active PTA with the nearby infant school. This organises a range of fund-raising and social activities, which make several thousand pounds for the benefit of both schools.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The leadership and management of the school is very good; the headteacher herself gives excellent leadership, with strong and clear educational direction. Since she took over the post after the last inspection there has been great improvement in the school. A very strong drive to raise standards of literacy and numeracy has been achieved by the use of rigorous assessment enabling the realistic targets to be achieved and exceeded, particularly in mathematics and science. Resources have been targeted throughout the school and especially in Year 6 for this purpose. Booster classes held by teachers in their free time have been very successful, especially in reading and mathematics, following the school's own methods, using high quality specialist teaching.
45. As a result of the outstanding educational vision, where quality and excellence are the principle aims and values, the provision and very high standards in the non-core subjects is well above average. In design and technology, for example, high quality work was seen from Year 6 pupils in projects and in competitions. In art, too, work exhibited is of a very high calibre; standards in both these subjects would be considered above average in Key Stage 3. Provision in music and physical education is also high; the choir has won competitions and recorded two CDs, and children work for certificates of achievement in games and gymnastics. Excellent enrichment by extracurricular activities is provided using specialist help, such as in the engineering club, a parent's dancing club, and teachers' expertise in badminton. Children are consulted about the running of the school, and have themselves drawn up the code of conduct for the home-school agreement, showing a strong sense of responsibility. These extend also to its partnership with parents who have been consulted in an extensive questionnaire, and there are numerous leaflets produced by the school to help parents help their children at home; particularly valuable are the guidelines on achievement, and methods of helping.
46. The delegation and the contribution of staff with management responsibilities is very efficient. The deputy head has responsibility for assessment and works hard to ensure that pupils' progress is thoroughly tracked and evaluated throughout their time at school. She and the lower school co-ordinator have devised an effective assessment for Year 3 pupils on their arrival, which is used well to put pupils into the right sets for literacy and numeracy. The vision for quality is shared by all teachers in the school, all of whom co-ordinate a subject or aspect of provision. Each co-ordinator is responsible for the action plans for development in their designated areas. These are well thought out and appropriately targeted towards raising standards.

Writing, for example, was found to be a weaker element of literacy provision after analysis of national tests results. Extra time during the week and the adoption of a new scheme is already having a very positive effect on the standard of written work. Whenever the outcome does not meet the school's high standards, the reasons are discussed, time and resources are dedicated to put this right.

47. The governing body is very supportive. Many governors are very active in the life of the school, and members bring in much expertise, for example in finance and ICT. All statutory duties are fulfilled. There are not many governors and they all necessarily sit on two or three committees, showing their dedication to the school as this is a heavy workload. Nevertheless, they undertake training for their position of responsibility, and also take part in staff training days, especially for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. The present governing body is newly formed from a joint one with the infant school, but there are several long-standing, experienced members remaining. The governors have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school, and constantly seek to improve weaknesses through their good long term view of the further development of the school. Their annual report to parents meets statutory requirements.
48. Governors help strongly in shaping the direction of the school. The development plan is very well targeted towards the needs of the school and appropriately costed. The outcomes of development are seen in the high quality of provision, such as in the ICT suite where excellent use of resources has yielded above average standards being achieved. The appropriateness of the school's priorities for development is excellent. Although the main thrust of the curriculum development planning is focused on literacy, numeracy and ICT, all subjects have a yearly focus under a maintenance programme. All targets for this are to raise standards in all subject areas, and for pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language.
49. Teaching is rigorously and systematically monitored by the headteacher and external advisers for literacy and numeracy. In addition, the headteacher monitors annually in a comprehensive performance review which includes two classroom observations. Appraisal and performance management is very good; the induction of new staff and the effectiveness of provision for training new teachers are both excellent. All teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory; nearly three quarters was better. Staff development is very good. Teachers' skills are regularly brought up to date by training and by teaching alongside specialists, such as for design and technology and music.
50. Very good action is taken to meet the school's targets. Setting introduced across the lower and upper juniors enables work to be matched more closely to pupils' ability, and support and extension work can be targeted appropriately. Assessment is used well to form sets and to maintain them. The school has identified clear targets for raising standards among pupils who are underachieving and is very effective in deploying staff expertise to support pupils. The special needs co-ordinator who has received training in teaching pupils from ethnic minorities and those with English as an additional language, uses her knowledge well to target support in addition to the school's deployment of a peripatetic experienced member of the local education authority's ethnic minority achievement team. The range of resources reflecting diverse cultures is usefully kept in classrooms.
51. Everybody in the school shares the commitment to quality and high achievement. Decoration and display is excellent; the caretaker polishes the floor at least twice a

day, and children respect and care for their surroundings. Administrative and lunch time staff also make a good contribution to the life of the school.

52. Educational priorities are very well supported through the school's efficient financial planning; reports are prepared for the finance committee. Funds are always judiciously used to pursue the raising of standards. An ICT technician, for example, is employed to maintain the computer network. Money is spent well on specialist teaching in science. The part-time teacher is a former secondary school teacher whose expertise in marking and moderating national tests at Key Stage 2 is especially valuable in helping pupils achieve better. Effective support in class for special educational needs given by the co-ordinator during literacy sessions in both lower sets (Year 3/4 and Year 5/6) is of high quality and relevant to the work of the whole class; pupils do not need to be withdrawn.
53. The school's use of new technology is very good, both in administration and throughout the curriculum, though the use of a spreadsheet programme is not yet made for tracking assessment data.
54. The use of specific grants for designated purposes is excellent. The school also puts in extra money from its own funds (from letting part of the premises) and bids for lottery funding. Specific funds from the Science and Technology Regional Organisation, for example, have been used for the science/engineering club. Other money has all been targeted towards raising standards, enriching curricular provision and improving the learning environment: carpets and furnishings have been renewed. Governors make prudent checks on finance. Money accumulated for specific projects, for example improvements to the outside (new basketball/netball courts, large chessboard, sheltered seating and exploration area) and large projects such as the development of the ICT suite, all have principles of best value rigorously applied. Good use is made of the community and lottery funding to obtain resources, such as computers. Governors are knowledgeable about the deployment of staff to best advantage, and three of them have undertaken training in performance management.
55. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is excellent, and very good use is made of voluntary help. The chairman of governors, for example, designed a website for the school, and parents willingly help in class and with extracurricular activities. Very good relationships ensure that staff feel valued, and they work well together as a team. Decisions about the running of the school are taken after discussions with all staff.
56. The spacious accommodation is used very well. The craft/technology room, for example, doubles effectively as a place for small group special needs sessions; it is also used well for storing large projects, and for the young engineers club. ICT facilities housed in the library are efficiently used for half classes so that all pupils have access to a computer individually. The other half either work in the library section or in the classroom under the supervision of a classroom assistant. The area outside provides a very good learning and recreational environment, including a netball court, a football pitch, an adventure area and a quiet sitting place with inlaid board games on tables.
57. There is a very good supply of learning resources in the school, which are used to excellent effect.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. There are no key issues because this school is already striving for, and succeeding in achieving, the highest quality in all aspects of education. However, in order to reach all-round excellence, the following minor issues should be addressed:
- (1) improve the clarity of learning objectives in some English lessons
(paragraph 19)
 - (2) raise the standards of writing to match those of speaking and listening
(paragraphs 3, 46, 59, 62, 65, 99)
 - (3) planning more curricular opportunities for spiritual education
(paragraph 32)
 - (4) make more efficient use of new technology in tracking pupils' assessment data
(paragraphs 38, 53)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2.6	29	39.4	29	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	161
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	41
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	26	19	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	24
	Girls	17	15	17
	Total	33	34	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (75)	76 (71)	91 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	22
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	32	33	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (80)	74 (69)	80 (71)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	9
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	143
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.6
Average class size	26.8

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	361018
Total expenditure	363394
Expenditure per pupil	2230
Balance brought forward from previous year	71072
Balance carried forward to next year	68696

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

161

Number of questionnaires returned

37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	59	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	54	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	59	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	41	51	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	38	27	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	38	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	30	46	14	0	11
The school is well led and managed.	65	30	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	41	0	0	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	78	22	0	0	0

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

59. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English, as shown by the national tests in 2000 are broadly in line with the national average for pupils achieving Level 4 and above, and also average compared with similar schools. This is an improvement on the previous year and continues the rising trend over the last three years. Pupils' attainment on entry in Year 3 in 1996 was well below average and by the end of the key stage, they had achieved well against their prior attainment. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment in English of the current Year 6 are above average in reading, speaking and listening, and average in writing.
60. By the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above the national average. The majority of pupils listen and speak confidently in a wide range of contexts, take an active part in discussions and report on their work to their peers, for instance in plenaries in literacy lessons and other subjects, notably science. In a Year 5/6 lesson on the solar system, for example, pupils worked together to prepare a demonstration for the rest of the class. All pupils were eager to take part, shared responsibilities and listened carefully to each others' contributions. In these presentations, pupils used language and subject terminology accurately, and showed a good understanding of the subject. In many lessons there is often a clear emphasis on specific subject vocabulary, for instance, in history and music, and this enables pupils to understand and use these terms in an appropriate way.
61. Attainment in reading by the end of the key stage is above the national average for the majority of pupils. They use a range of methods to help them in their reading and discuss a variety of texts. They read enthusiastically and regularly. Higher ability pupils read consistently with good expression and a sense of the book's style. The majority of pupils use a range of methods to decipher words and meaning when they read independently. They predict what might happen, using their knowledge of the plot and characters and justify their predictions. Pupils recall in some detail the range of books they may have read and justify their preferences for particular books or authors. Reading is well managed with increasingly improving provision for guided reading and positive use of information and communication technology curriculum. Pupils keep their own reading records as well as diaries. These are effectively monitored by parents. Effective records containing diagnostic comments are kept by teachers as part of ongoing assessment. Silent reading sessions are well used and pupils are motivated to read. These improvements in provision, including the focus and staff training in the use of guided reading, are showing a positive impact on standards and explain the good progress pupils make.
62. Attainment in writing by the end of the key stage is in line with the national average. Pupils write in a variety of forms, including letters, play scripts, biography and poetry. Those of higher ability write extensive, imaginative pieces with correct use of punctuation and paragraphing. Standards of handwriting and spelling are good and work is consistently well presented. Marking of pupils' work is consistently good and often focused on constructive identification of strengths and weaknesses; it provides guidance for pupils to improve their work. Pupils' standards on entry in Year 3 are below the national average in writing but by the end of the key stage, they make good progress and achieve well against their prior attainment.

63. Pupils' attitudes in English are positive in all lessons seen. The majority are keen, well focused, and engage well with activities; they contribute well when answering questions. Standards of behaviour are very high and pupils are keen and proud to demonstrate and talk about what they have been doing to peers and visitors. They show initiative when they store resources away, are keen to help and are very obliging when given responsibilities.
64. The quality of teaching observed was very good or good in just under half the lessons, and satisfactory in the rest. In the best lessons, teachers show a secure knowledge and understanding of English. They explain tasks thoroughly and have high expectations; they intervene positively to promote learning in progress, and provide well designed tasks which engage all pupils. In these lessons, skilful questioning is matched to pupils' abilities and all pupils are involved at their own level. Group tasks are thoughtfully planned enabling pupils to work independently; and are closely linked to the main objectives. In a number of lessons, however, objectives are not fully and explicitly shared with pupils to focus their attention and guide the way they approach and tackle independent tasks. Sometimes, the shared text is not easily accessible when the script on the overhead projector is small and pupils are not effectively positioned to contribute to discussion.
65. The school uses the literacy framework effectively and has used its monitoring well to identify strengths and weaknesses. Clear and effective methods are used to address weaknesses and improve practice. This has led to whole school staff development in the planning and teaching of guided reading, and currently to the identification of writing as an area for development. The school has developed effective methods of analysing assessment outcomes and has been using the information judiciously to target groups of pupils and provide them with support. This has had a clear and positive impact on pupils' achievement and their capacity to learn. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed to improving standards further. The headteacher has an effective system to monitor different aspects of the subject with a clear focus on pupils' achievement and accountability of the co-ordinator for these development priorities.

MATHEMATICS

66. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in mathematics, as shown by the national tests in 2000 are above the national average for pupils achieving Level 4 and above, and also above average compared with similar schools. This group had below average attainment on entry to the school, and the results obtained exceeded the targets set by 19 per cent. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is broadly in line with the national average. There has been some fluctuation over the last four years, but the general trend has been upward. In 2000, there was no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement.
67. The previous report stated that standards were above average. However, they dropped very sharply in 1998 because of disruption following that inspection, and the school has been putting much effort into raising standards since then. Evidence from lesson observation and analysis of pupils' work shows that in the current Year 6, standards have been steadily rising; these pupils have already exceeded their targets, and look set to produce test results above average next Spring. The majority is attaining the expected level already and many are moving to higher levels.
68. Working in pairs, pupils aged 11 describe the common two-dimensional shapes,

such as octagon and trapezium, with accuracy so that their partner can draw the shape and identify it. Below average pupils distinguish between isosceles, equilateral and scalene triangles, with prompting from their teacher. Higher ability pupils are familiar with the language of probability, showing good understanding of the 'certain', 'even' and 'poor' chance of pulling out odd and even numbers from a bag, and in discussing the unfairness of using loaded dice.

69. Teaching is good overall, and one of its strengths is the very accurate assessment, beginning with a baseline assessment when children come into school. This is used well with the results of the Key Stage 1 tests to place pupils in sets where there is a narrower range of ability. This enables work to be matched more closely to each pupil's needs. Within the sets, further differentiation occurs in most cases, for example in a lower ability Year 3/4 set where the teaching involved making up different sets of coins to 20p and subtracting amounts determined by throwing dice. All pupils successfully consolidated knowledge of money and subtraction.
70. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of mathematics at this level, and have received extension training in numeracy. Lessons have been monitored and evaluated by external advisers. Consequently, the Numeracy Strategy is firmly in place, and lessons follow its pattern well. The teaching of basic numeracy skills is good, with a great emphasis on mental work in all lessons. Quick mental arithmetic sessions in Years 3/4, for example, on multiplying and dividing numbers by ten (including decimals), was instrumental in promoting clear thinking by the teacher's use of focused questions, and even the more hesitant pupils were encouraged to have a go, with very good results.
71. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and this is manifest in the ways they provide extension work for those of higher ability in particular, and challenging work for all abilities in general, especially with problem solving and pattern finding which is often added as an extension exercise, for example, to find the formula for odd/even number patterns. Teaching methods are good, with emphasis on mental skill development and practical activities. ICT is used to great advantage, for example in presenting the results of a survey of favourite sweets as bar charts, and to reinforce the concepts of shape and space, using software via the internet. This was seen to help motivate a low ability group who were then able to answer questions presented as a self-scoring exercise. Pupils were very keen to get the right answer and persevered until they did.
72. Teachers' management of pupils is very good; behaviour is very good as a result, but because of the interesting and challenging work, pupils are eager to do well in their mathematics and enjoy their lessons. These are planned to be full of activities and no time is wasted. A good variety of resources is used and good use is made of number squares and digit cards, particularly in mental sessions. This helps pupils to see recurring patterns, such as odd and even multiples of specific numbers up to 100, and because the practice is so regular, pupils retain the memory. Mathematics class work is reinforced by homework regularly, which is consistently and efficiently marked.
73. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who is also the deputy head and in charge of assessment. Consequently, assessment in mathematics is very good, and used well to form sets, diagnose strengths and weaknesses, check progress towards targets and to identify underachievement. The co-ordinator has good vision for the development of the subject, and has drawn up a good action plan for this. Mathematics is given high priority in the school, and targets set for each year are

commonly exceeded.

SCIENCE

74. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards in science, as shown by the national tests in 2000, are above the national average for pupils reaching Level 4, and also above those in similar schools. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels is in line with the national average. In spite of some slight fluctuation over the past four years, the trend in attainment now shows steady improvement so that it is now broadly in line with the national picture. In 2000, there was no significant difference in the results of boys and girls. The previous inspection reported that although pupils' achieved above average standards at the end of the key stage, there was evidence to show that standards were very variable, and that in one third of classes standards were below. Evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' written work in this inspection shows that the majority of the present Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve levels in line with the national expectation by the time they reach the end of the key stage next year, and that a significant number of them will achieve the higher levels. The improvements in standards are now consistent across the classes and ages of the pupils.
75. One of the strengths of the science work in this school is that emphasis is firmly placed on ensuring pupils are fully involved in experimental and investigative work. This method is applied whether considering the properties of materials, plant and animal life, forces, or the provision of a healthy diet. Throughout the school, pupils are making good progress in developing their scientific skills. They are able to identify, with growing sophistication, criteria for testing the fairness of their experimental methods using a range of equipment. Pupils record their experiments using procedures which allow them to write notes as they work, observe results and draw conclusions using scientific language correctly. Many pupils are able to apply their findings and conclusions to other experimental work. Older pupils are particularly adept at predicting what will be the result, then confirming their predictions. They are making good progress in thinking as scientists. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, enjoy discussing their work.
76. Younger pupils in Years 3/4 follow instructions carefully and, after making observations and discussion with their teachers, are beginning to understand how to devise their own simple experiments under conditions of fair testing. By the time they reach the end of Year 5, pupils have covered some of the National Curriculum programmes of study in great depth. Using diagrams of different electrical circuits pupils predict, test and record their results and are able to make general statements about why some circuits fail. In another lesson, pupils were able to present information clearly following their research on the topic 'The earth and beyond' and show a good understanding of the movement of the earth and sun. Detailed work on the human body is also taught in conjunction with the sex education programme. By the end of Year 6 many pupils achieve standards that are above average.
77. Pupils' attitude to their learning is good overall, and very good in Years 5 and 6. They enjoy science and take investigative and experimental work seriously. Older pupils carefully apply criteria to ensure that there is no bias in their experiments; they work hard and stay on task. They work well with others when testing and solving problems. They reach conclusions and suggest other experiments to confirm their findings and use the results of their work to develop further lines of investigation. Pupils listen attentively and respond positively to the teacher's questions, concentrate hard on their work, and are proud of their success. In one lesson, the teacher asked pupils to

continue their work on 'the Earth and beyond' for homework. Pupils received the idea positively and most completed it by the following day.

78. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some examples of very good teaching in the upper school. Teachers are knowledgeable of the science they teach as well as the stages pupils have reached in the development of skills. Most teachers have high expectation that by the end of the lesson the pupils will know more and have greater skill than at the beginning. The teachers plan well and the work is appropriate for pupils' abilities. They make the learning intentions clear at the outset of the lesson. Teachers choose appropriate teaching methods, frequently using demonstration, practice and evaluation matched to the curricular needs of the pupils. Teachers have good organisational skills, provide resources that are easily accessible, enthuse pupils and manage to give structure, challenge and pace to their lessons. Some opportunities for pupils to research information using computers are provided, but more could be developed. Teachers of Years 5/6 pupils assess accurately what pupils learn during lessons and record end of topic and end of term assessments. During lessons, teachers frequently remind pupils of the health and safety aspects of their work such as not tasting, and treating bulbs and batteries with care.
79. The subject is well co-ordinated with a clear policy and effective guidance provided for teachers. The co-ordinator monitors provision by examining teachers' plans and ensures that the subject is well resourced. The previous inspection reported that teaching and pupils standards of attainment and progress were good. The school has sustained those good standards, and is building on them as the subject continues to develop.

ART

80. The previous inspection reported that standards were in line with national expectation and that sound progress was made across the ability range. There has been a very considerable improvement in standards since that time. Although no art lessons were observed during this inspection, evidence from pupils' work in sketch books and from displays and scrutiny of the teachers' planning, demonstrates that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are attaining well above average standards, and are making very good progress by the end of the key stage.
81. The art curriculum is supported by a clearly detailed policy, which includes guidance on progressive skills in shape, form, space, colour and tone, and pattern and line. Pupils receive a breadth of experiences and a wide variety of stimuli to inspire their creative efforts. Younger pupils use paint, pencils, crayons and collage to produce some colourful pictures, which they are pleased to show to visitors. They explore patterns and colour combinations in their paintings and sometimes use a variety of other materials to create multi-media pictures. Older pupils have studied 'Colours from Nature.' In one example, they studied photographs of butterflies and then focused on a small section of the picture to use as a template. Using watercolours, they enlarged the picture, matched the colours with great skill to produce some carefully observed and delicate results. A similar effect was achieved using flower pictures. Pupils also develop their skills to create their own tone collage pictures in the style of an Esher print. In this work, they used a grey wash with black, white and grey pastels for the leaves to give a three-dimensional effect. The results are beautifully displayed in one of the classrooms with information about the artist's work. In the corridor older pupils have also produced some excellent examples of colour patterns based on the work of Rennie Mackintosh.

82. Art work in the school shows that pupils are being given a clear understanding of art skills and an appreciation of the work of famous artists. Pupils have no difficulty in describing the various techniques they use in appropriate detail of, for example, how to use different drawing pencils to produce a desired effect, and how they apply painting techniques they have learned in their own work. The high standards achieved by the pupils by the end of Year 6 owe much to the strength of the school's policy for art and the enthusiasm and love of the subject by the staff. In this way the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
83. The co-ordinator for the subject has a clear understanding of the art curriculum. She helps teachers incorporate the subject more effectively into their topic planning and promote the pupils' skills and knowledge about the subject in a more effective way. Appropriate resources have been purchased and the co-ordinator advises colleagues on all aspects of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. The standard of design and technology is well above average at all levels in the school, but especially by the end of the key stage, when pupils aged 11 make toys with moving parts and electrically driven vehicles, which would be more usually found in Key Stage 3. Only one whole lesson was seen during the inspection, but the evidence of completed work, photographs of work finished over the past four years, and the pupils' enthusiasm for showing and talking about their work, was overwhelmingly in support of the judgement.
85. The school has taken the approach that 'less is better' and now plans modules of work undertaken by each class in a six-week period. A whole afternoon a week is allotted to this, which enables the pupils to concentrate on designing and making a really high quality piece of work of which they are justly proud. Examples include moving toys, such as Miss Muffet's spider, a NASA space launch and the basketball player made by older children.
86. A specialist teacher is employed to do the rotation, and this enables the class teacher to learn skills alongside and follow up the work later. This way of working is successful; some very high quality teaching was seen in the upper school where pupils were learning skills such as the correct ways to measure and cut templates for their motorised vehicles. They had drawn their designs to scale and made careful measurements of the length of wood needed. The teacher paid great attention to getting the measurements accurate and to using saws correctly, giving children a good foundation for the future.
87. The scheme of work is based on that of the local education authority, enhanced by the QCA guidance. Skills are built up through the school by younger pupils concentrating on making a two-dimensional frame, which includes weaving different materials. Work is well differentiated to take account of the different ages in each class. In the Year 5/6 lesson seen, for example, younger pupils were making a simple box-like three-dimensional frame for their vehicle whilst those in Year 6 had to make a more complex shape. Further progression of skills is assured by liaison with the infant school, where the same visiting specialist teacher teaches. This enables older children to build on their skills from their earlier years of schooling. The design and technology co-ordinator leads the subject well, and is very enthusiastic, monitoring provision and outcomes, and making sure the subject is well resourced.

88. The curriculum is enriched by a popular science/engineering club, run by an engineer once a week after school. In the session seen, pupils were given expert tuition in using more sophisticated equipment, such as low voltage power drills and bench saws. All showed great concentration and determination, working on projects such as a Morse code transmitter and models to be powered by pneumatics or solar power. A solar powered Ferris wheel and a pneumatic model of the Titanic sinking were much in evidence; these were made for a competition, which the school won. All the pupils in the club, an equal mix of boys and girls, were working towards a Bronze award from the British Association of Young Scientists (BAYS).

GEOGRAPHY

89. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. On the basis of this evidence together with the scrutiny of pupils' work, planning and discussion with the co-ordinator, the attainment of the majority of pupils by the end of the key stage is judged to be in line with national expectations.
90. In Year 3/4, pupils studying Saint Lucia as a contrasting locality, identify and describe the key physical and human features of the island. They investigate aspects like the transport system and housing and use graphs to represent their findings. Much of this work is enhanced through the use of information and communication technology, such as CD-ROMs to research information on different human and physical features of Kenya. By the end of the key stage, pupils in Year 5/6 identify similarities and differences between North Hertfordshire and North Norfolk, draw on their fieldwork visit to West Runton and develop a strong sense of place. They use symbols and keys appropriately and communicate their findings effectively in well written pieces with a good choice of vocabulary, using 'word pictures' to describe landscape, for example.
91. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement on teaching as the focus during the week of inspection was on history.
92. Since the last inspection, resources have been audited and reorganised to facilitate access to them. The development of the curriculum is appropriately focused on skills progression, the use of enquiry approaches and fieldwork. The co-ordinator has identified areas of development but these are not sufficiently focused nor directed towards raising achievement in the subject.

HISTORY

93. Attainment in history exceeds national expectations. By the end of key stage, the majority of pupils show a good grasp of the Tudor period. They use a variety of sources like pictures and make observations, for example about schooling, and compare different aspects with today. They respond to the teacher's questions with confidence, showing well developed skills in interpreting evidence and make notes of what they observe. They use a range of information gleaned from books and on visits, for instance to Kentwell Hall, to describe in detail different types of clothing, noting differences of social class and reproducing designs of different kinds. Evidence from previous written work indicates good use of ICT, especially the internet to research information on Victorian dolls, and aspects of health such as the use of surgery and use of transport. Much of this work is carefully presented and indicate high levels of motivation and interest.
94. Pupils work with enthusiasm in history and show interest and curiosity in discussing

features of a particular period. During lessons, they concentrate well and listen attentively to teachers' explanations and are keen to answer and ask questions. When they are given opportunities to discuss and produce work requiring planning, they collaborate well, share ideas and develop skills of negotiating and reaching decisions together.

95. The quality of teaching is mostly good or better. Learning objectives are thoroughly explained and high expectations and outcomes are clearly communicated to pupils. Effective methods such as the use of pictures to develop pupils' observations, note taking and collaborative discussion are used to extend pupils' understanding and independent learning. Resources are carefully chosen and used to motivate pupils, and heighten their curiosity and interest; all pupils are involved through effective management.
96. The planning of the history curriculum is well managed with a clear focus on skills progression and the use of enquiry approaches. Resources are effectively organised and easily accessible. Good use is made of visits to museums to enhance the curriculum. However, targets for developing the subject are not sufficiently focused on raising standards, and no success criteria are identified to enable the school to monitor and evaluate pupils' achievement.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. The previous inspection report found that pupils' attainment was average and their progress satisfactory. The findings of this inspection are that pupils' attainment by the end of the key stage is likely to be above the average of that found nationally. There are many strengths in the breadth of the curriculum, in subject planning and in teaching. This judgement rests on scrutiny of pupils' recent work, teachers' planning documents, lesson observations and discussion with pupils in the school. During the inspection, there were limited opportunities to observe direct teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) in the classrooms. Lessons mainly take place in the recently established ICT suite. Most lessons observed in the lower school focused on pupils' word processing skills, and saving images and text into their own files. There is equal access for boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs are given good access to ICT facilities with sensitive adult help. Higher ability pupils show suitable independence in using information technology, and many other pupils are gaining the confidence to proceed without guidance.
98. Pupils' standards of attainment in lessons are above average. Younger ones use the controls competently when they learn word-processing. Year 3 pupils type their names and letters, use capital letters and are able to position the cursor accurately when deleting or modifying text. By Year 4, most show fluency in basic operations such as the use of the keyboard and the mouse, and work confidently with toolbars and menus. Their good progress continues into the upper school. In all classes, pupils understand and respond well to the teacher's instructions and have a clear understanding of the vocabulary and terms used. Year 5 and 6 pupils have experience of using the computer to design the front page of a newspaper. They skilfully move text and images, alter fonts, use click and drag techniques, and work at their own pace, sometimes experimenting with colour to produce different styles of presentation of their work. The Year 5/6 pupils are familiar with other means of communication, for example, e-mail and fax. In these classes a good start has been made in using the Internet as a resource for learning, as, for example, when pupils were asked to find information about the earth and the solar system in science. At the end of the session, pupils save their work on disc themselves to continue their work

back in the classroom.

99. Throughout the school, pupils have very good attitudes to their work in ICT. They are well motivated, confident and make good progress in the subject. They apply themselves well and do not waste their time when using computers. They are very co-operative when it is necessary to share computer facilities and freely help each other without prompting. During the periods they were observed, pupils enjoyed the activities and worked well together. They eagerly pass on their knowledge to others, and when explaining their work, they handle equipment carefully. Pupils are proud of their output and like to see it displayed. Older pupils use word processing to present examples of work, and many turn to it with a sense of familiarity as a means of improving the quality and presentation of their writing.
100. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good. Teachers have sufficient knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject when working with a larger group than they have experienced previously in their classrooms. The support of a skilled ICT technician in the suite has undoubtedly helped the staff to become more confident in this regard. Introductions to tasks and to new ways of using ICT are clear and direct, and when ICT is directly taught, there is good and sometimes very rapid progress.
101. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' ability to co-operate well and work at a good pace, often independently of the teacher. In a valuable initiative, they sometimes enable the more confident and skilled pupils to work with the more hesitant or younger pupils in the class. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Staff also are aware of the need to allow higher ability pupils to work at a more rapid pace, and of the need to present them with challenges and extension work. This was seen in a Year 5/6 class when some pupils having completed their work, selected another task and found new ways to suit their levels of working. All teachers place appropriate emphasis on sharing learning objectives with the pupils and then reviewing how much they have learned at the end of the session. Their planning ensures that ICT is used to support teaching and learning successfully in many other subjects such as English, mathematics, history, geography and science.
102. The new computer suite is housed in the school library. Despite there being enough computers for one between two, some issues of organisation present some pupils with difficult access to the library and to the computers. The staff are discussing ways to overcome these difficulties. The Year 3/4 teachers, for example, have decided to separate their year groups so that pupils are able to work without having to share a machine with another child. This has already shown a marked improvement for pupils in their confidence levels and their speed of working so that they rapidly develop soundly based skills. Other major aspects of the subject such as data handling, using spreadsheets, desktop publishing and the construction and use of simple databases are also being developed. Some pupils have had experience of programming a floor turtle by giving instructions in the correct order so that it carries out a sequence of travel and turning movements.
103. There is a very good scheme of work for ICT, which has been recently reviewed to take account of the QCA guidance. Although some of the pupils' fluency, knowledge and understanding is often gained outside school, the policy and scheme ensures that pupils are able to make progress in a continuous and progressive way at a pace suited to their needs. The subject co-ordinator supports her colleagues and takes charge of ordering appropriate software resources. The co-ordinator also organises in-service training for all members of staff. Learning information technology skills,

which is the present priority for the school, should then have an even greater impact on pupils' work. There is a very good resource in the number of computers available, and the school has an appropriate range of software for teaching the National Curriculum.

MUSIC

104. The quality of music education is very good. Children are encouraged to participate, and do so with obvious enjoyment, both in lessons and in extracurricular activities. In a very good assembly devoted to music, for example, children showed great enthusiasm when asked to think about the words of the songs they had tunefully sung. This led smoothly into reflection about feelings and then prayer. The quality of singing is good for children this age, helped by intelligent understanding of the teachers seen, who unselfconsciously sing themselves with the expectation and reward of children following. In the assembly, the headteacher made sure children were sitting properly and making their best efforts. The formation of an additional choir to sing descants gives greater dimension to vocal music attempted. Profitable rehearsal for a forthcoming production was made well during this assembly, which closed most appropriately with a recording of music by Bach to calm the mood.
105. Two lessons were observed; one was very good and the other good. In the very good lesson, children in Year 5/6 showed great discernment in listening to music and were able to tell that some of the instruments in a recording of Tudor music were not authentic. They have acquired a good knowledge of instruments, and some children show well above average standards of understanding in pitch and rhythm. One boy, for example, was able to explain modulation in simple terms. The class showed good listening skills as, after a second playing, they were able to sing two phrases with a good degree of accuracy. When presented with a score in Tudor manuscript, they showed an ability to interpret it; many were keen to sing solo. Almost every member of the class was able to read a modern score. The very good quality of learning in this lesson was achieved by equally fine teaching. The good lesson in the lower school showed children's above average understanding of music, and their good development of musical skills. They are already able to maintain a vocal line well over an instrumental ostinato. The teacher gave a clear introduction to the lesson and kept children busy as they concentrated well on learning to sing what they read.
106. The music curriculum is greatly enhanced by a very good range of extracurricular activities, including two choirs and instrumental tuition. The school takes part in music festivals and competitions with great success, producing recordings on compact disc. Rehearsals are economically fitted into breaks and lunch times to give the children opportunity to attend their activities after school. The small orchestra improved a great deal in its observed rehearsal time. Instrumentalists regularly enhance assemblies by their playing; their ability to sight-read and make music after a very short rehearsal is above average. The co-ordinator leads the subject well by example, teaching basic skills to the whole lower school every week. These lessons are very valuable in ensuring that all the children learn to read music, paying attention to pitch and rhythm. The co-ordinator gives freely of her time for extracurricular activities, and is committed to high quality performance from the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Standards of attainment by the end of the key stage exceed national expectations. When playing netball, most pupils in Year 3/4 demonstrate well developed skills in throwing and catching the ball, showing precision and accuracy in passing. As they

practise, they experiment with height and distance and adjust technique. Year 5/6 pupils performing a Tudor dance, demonstrated skills in keeping rhythm as they execute dance steps and a sequence of movements including stepping backwards, twirling and clapping at the right time. They used the teacher's and others' performance to improve their own and worked well as a group.

108. Pupils respond generally well in physical education lessons. They understand the importance of listening and following instructions. They work well individually and with a partner. They change quickly and all wear an appropriate kit and help willingly in carrying equipment at the end of sessions. Older pupils are enthusiastic and show keen interest and motivation when working in a group.
109. The quality of teaching was good in the two lessons observed. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their planning is detailed, well structured and identifies clear objectives. Pupils are thoroughly briefed about the skills to be practised and the teacher uses effective demonstrations and interventions to enable pupils to improve their performance. Time and pace are effectively used where pupils are divided into groups to practise activities. Support for pupils with special needs is effective and well deployed.
110. The co-ordinator shows much enthusiasm and commitment to the subject and has a clear overview of its development. Pupils are involved in a wide and rich range of extracurricular activities including basketball, gymnastics, netball, dancing, badminton and football. Staff expertise is high, well spread and effectively used for the benefit of pupils. Resources in physical education are good, easily accessible and include facilities for hard surface and fields which enhance provision and are used well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. The attainment of pupils in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, which the school follows. On the basis of the evidence seen and the discussions held with pupils, their knowledge of Christianity is more secure than their knowledge and understanding of other religions. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand the nature of the Bible and that the Bible consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament which includes the Gospels. They know that the Bible contains different types of writing such as letters and prophecies.
112. The progress pupils make in lessons is satisfactory as they acquire more knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 3/4 recall relevant information about the life of Jesus when discussing pilgrimages. They know that Jesus was baptised by John in the river Jordan and have some understanding of the Holy Land. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are aware of the significance of the city of Jerusalem to different faiths. They have studied and written facts about Judaism, Hinduism and the Muslim faiths as well as stories in the context of the Christian faith. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good. In the lessons seen, they listened quietly to the teachers and to each other. Pupils with special needs make a full contribution to class discussions.
113. The teaching of religious education is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. With pupils in a Year 3/4 lesson, for example, the teacher used questioning effectively to consolidate and review pupils' knowledge about making special journeys to worship before asking pupils to try to define the notion of 'pilgrimage'. Pupils were asked to reflect on journeys made by the Jews and shown pictures of special places relevant to Jesus' birth and life. These questions helped to maintain the pupils' interest and

prompt them to show their understanding. Teachers use a good range of artefacts, pictures, photographs and videos to illustrate how people from other countries have different customs to celebrate particular festivals.

114. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They take pride in demonstrating their knowledge and understanding during lessons. They listen attentively to others and wait patiently to explain their own thoughts and ideas. They enjoy the variety of approaches their teachers encourage them to use. As a result, all pupils feel secure and confident to express their views to the rest of the class, including pupils with special educational needs.
115. Following the last inspection the policy and scheme of work have been reviewed to take account of QCA documents alongside the local authority's agreed syllabus. Together they provide details of aims, objectives and a scheme of work to show how pupils' learning should progress in order to develop their understanding and skills. There is detailed termly planning which links activities to learning objectives. Teachers, through their marking, monitor pupils' work and the co-ordinator for the subject supports and helps colleagues with any difficulties.
116. There is a good range of resources in the school to support religious education teaching, including books and artefacts for all major religions. Teachers use the internet effectively to gain access to information about many faiths, cultures and traditions. Pupils have studied the internal features of a Mosque, for example, using the Internet effectively in their work. Whilst religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils, there is not yet a planned programme to ensure that themes discussed in assemblies are effectively followed up by the classes.